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# THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT

### THE IMMIGRATION BUREAU AND THE STATUS OF THE NURSE

In spite of the fact that recognition has been granted to the nursing profession in many directions, the attitude of the immigration bureau remains unchanged. Graduate nurses entering the country to fill positions in institutions or with associations devoted to social service are likely to be held up as violating the contract labor regulations. Our attention has been called to an instance of this kind in which a Canadian nurse, answering an advertisement seen in the JOURNAL by a friend, entered into an engagement with a state tuberculosis association to come for a month's trial in its service and was held up when crossing the border of the United States. She appealed to the immigration department at Washington which sustained the action of the immigration officer in detaining her and she was obliged to cancel her engagement.

Professional workers of all classes are exempt from contract labor restrictions. There was a time when immigration officials attempted to restrain pupils from entering the training schools of this country from Canada as coming under this same enactment but this was adjusted on the ground that such nurses were pupils coming into the country for education and were really students.

Graduate nurses have as a rule passed back and forth between the two countries freely without being interfered with but occasionally a case similar to this has come to our knowledge where a contract had been made definitely by correspondence.

We think the time has come when our three national organizations should take this matter up with the authorities at Washington and request that properly educated nurses shall be placed in the class of professional workers and not with contract laborers.

## PROGRESS OF STATE REGISTRATION

The programme for state registration for this winter promises to be interesting. Six states have already reported their intentions to submit laws or amendments to their legislatures: Maine, Alabama and North Dakota being the new states coming into line; Massachusetts, Wisconsin and Nebraska having amendments under consideration for the improvement of the laws already in existence. At this writing the action to be taken by Connecticut and New York is undecided.

Three points which past experience shows to be vitally important in the administration of the laws for state registration are common to all: first, a board of examiners composed of nurses; second, the necessity of keeping intact for current expenses or future development of funds received from registration fees; and third, the absolute necessity of proper provision being made for the inspection of schools for nurses, with the right of regulating standards of preliminary preparation and of the curriculum.

No one state has yet passed an ideal law but some are much better than others. States coming into line for the first time should build upon the foundations of all that is best in all the states and not be satisfied to follow the lead of any one state or group of states whose standards are low. When we consider that thirty-nine states now have some kind of law in operation for the regulation of nursing, that these three new states coming into line will bring the number up to forty-two, if their laws are passed, and that there are only forty-nine states in the Union, it will be seen that there will be only seven states without such legislation and these are the ones without large nursing interests, with the exception of Ohio which is prevented from securing a satisfactory law by the peculiar restrictions of the constitution of the state.

With all the imperfections of these laws, the amount of legislation and the improvement in nursing education and professional status during these eleven years since the passing of the first law is phenomenal if one considers the slight progress that was evident for a number of years before that date and this whole legal structure is the result of the efforts of nurses themselves for the uplift of their own profession. With such a beginning as has been made the next ten years should be productive of still greater changes in the way of remedying defects in existing laws and of enforcing their administration.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING SCHOOL OFFICERS BEING FAMILIAR WITH THE REGISTRATION LAWS

As we progress in state registration it becomes absolutely necessary for every woman holding a teaching or executive position in a training school to be familiar with the laws of her state governing the same. There should be no uncertainty in the mind of any such official when conversing with prospective pupils or in advising students during their term of training or when the time approaches for them to go up for the state examination. Too many of our training school officers content themselves with the round of duty which the school and hospital call for, are not interested in any public work, local or state, and concern themselves little with the laws which have been passed or which are under consideration affecting the educational requirements of the school and the legal status of the nurse after graduation. Pupils naturally look to these officers for information and instruction in regard to such matters. It seems incomprehensible that any reputable school should admit to its classes students whose preliminary training prohibits them from going forward for the examination at the end of their training, but such we believe is the case in some institutions.

Every law for state registration that does not control training schools in this regard should be so amended that the recognition of the school carries with it the obligation to admit only such pupils as meet the educational requirements fixed by the law. Schools that in this enlightened age are following the old custom of considering only the amount of work they may obtain from the woman during her period of training should have their charters taken away from them, and it should be the business of the entire nursing body to see that women are not exploited in this way for the commercial advantage of the hospital.

AGE LIMIT IN THE RED CROSS

The action of the Red Cross in limiting the age for enrollment to forty years is not intended, we are sure, as a reflection upon the ability of the older women of our profession but simply means that the kind of hardship Red Cross nurses on active service must encounter demands for the nursing force, as for the army, persons who have not exhausted their strength by years of hard work and who need not be considered in the matter of endurance. The first object of Red Cross enrollment is to provide a staff for possible war service and for this two things are required of the nurse accepted, she must be absolutely obedient to orders and she must be ready to work under unusual and irregular conditions, meeting hardships which would not ordinarily occur in nursing work.

It is pleasant to know from a Buffalo exchange that the English Surgeon General at the Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar, a brusque man, chary of his words, characterized our Red Cross nurses who worked under him there as "quiet and efficient."

Anyone who has been a patient in a hospital, where she has had care from both graduate and pupil nurses, knows that there are most desirable qualities to be found in the older nurses which cannot be possessed by the younger one, because they are developed by time and experience. The older nurse does not follow orders as blindly but puts a different kind of intelligence and sympathy into her work. From her work outside the hospital she appreciates better the condition of the family and watches the matter of economy and waste. She enters more closely into the natural anxiety of the friends and to her the discomforts that attend the days following an operation are of importance, something to be alleviated by any means possible, not to be taken for granted as a necessary evil.

The most important executive positions in institutions and organizations are being held now, as in the past, by women who are near forty if not past it. They have made their mistakes, they have learned their lessons and can now guide others. We cannot yet spare our older nurses from our general nursing activities even though they are barred from the Red Cross Nursing Service. They will continue, as always, to carry the burden of leadership and educational progress and will remain the executive heads of our great institutions where experience and judgment count for more than physical endurance.

#### THE EXPOSITIONS IN CALIFORNIA

Private advices from San Francisco give the most enthusiastic and glowing description of the Fair which has already a daily attendance of 50,000 people. It is beautifully located and the color scheme is beyond anything that has been seen in this country.

San Diego nurses are urging those who do not travel in a party with a fixed route to include the southern exposition in their itinerary, which they can do without extra expense.

#### A MISLEADING ADVERTISEMENT

On page 15 of the advertising section of the January JOURNAL appeared an advertisement with the heading Official Nurses Train, offering certain accommodations for the journey to California. We want to explain to the members of the American Nurses' Association that this is not one of the trains in charge of the Transportation Com-

mittee of that association. Information in regard to these may be obtained, as we have stated several times, from Miss L. L. Dock, who is in charge of the route giving several interesting side trips, or from Mrs. C. V. Twiss, who is in charge of the more direct route. The tour which was advertised is not vouched for officially by the association but is an independent business proposition which claims to offer a very comfortable means of making the trip and attending the exposition.

#### IMPORTANT CHANGE IN DATE

At the conference of the executive committees of the three national organizations of nurses, held in New York in January, it was decided to change the date of the San Francisco meetings from May 30-June 5 to June 20-26, in order that our convention may be held at the same time as those of the American Medical Association and the American Hospital Association. It was felt that many nurses would be glad to attend some of the meetings of two or three of these bodies, that doctors' wives, who are nurses, would attend our convention who could not otherwise come and that the later date would make it possible for many to plan their vacations to include our meetings and a visit to the Exposition.

#### DEATH OF MISS JOHNSTONE

After closing our pages, word reached us of the death of Margaret M. Johnstone, superintendent of nurses at St. Luke's Hospital, Chicago. While not widely known the country over, Miss Johnstone was one of the great quiet forces that make for the best things in our profession. Her beautiful, cultured face and manner, her adherence to the highest ideals, her true interest in every pupil committed to her charge made her a great influence with all who knew her, and she will be most sincerely missed and mourned. A fuller notice of her work will appear in the March JOURNAL.